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RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0163
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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 1907
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 0079
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0366
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 0817
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 0070
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 0834
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0256
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [MOPS](#) [KISL](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: NEW ROLE FOR TRIBAL COUNCILS?: FINDING A VOICE FOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 498 (B) 05 PESHAWAR 440 (C) 05 PESHAWAR 546 (D) PESHAWAR 059 (E) 05 PESHAWAR 597

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REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) In response to the deteriorating security situation in North Waziristan (Ref A), 11th Corps Commander Hamid Khan has prodded the Political Agent there to work closely with that agency's council on new development projects. Since their establishment in late 2004, agency councils had been virtually ignored (REF B). Apparently, General Khan reckons that the tribal agency council's participation is long overdue, helping to deliver stronger community buy-in and security guarantees for projects and thus allowing the Army to devote more resources to counter-terrorism operations.

[1](#)2. (SBU) North Waziristan Political Agent Zaheerul Islam confirmed to us that he plans to implement fully General Khan's suggestion in the coming days. He intends to consult regularly with his Agency Council on both project formulation and implementation. If carried out, his plan constitutes a first step toward meaningful empowerment of Agency Councils in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) (REF C).

[1](#)3. (C) In a related development, the All Agency Councilors Alliance, a federation of FATA agency councils, recently reiterated their long-standing plea to the NWFP Governor to extend similar development roles to Agency Councils throughout the FATA. While the FATA Secretariat remains skeptical about the Agency Councils' contribution to ongoing development work, the Governor is seriously weighing the request, chiefly due to the precedent set by General Khan's initiative.

[1](#)4. (C) COMMENT: The Pakistan Army continues to be in the driver's seat steering new initiatives in the FATA. Governor Rehman and his staff are again following rather than leading, casting doubt on their management of the border area (REF D). While General Khan's instruction may later be set aside or superceded by a new development authority such as the Federal Ministry of Industry, it apparently will be given a limited chance for now. We believe greater community participation bodes well for the political and economic development of the FATA and quietly advocated its adoption by GOP authorities including General Khan (REF E). END COMMENT.

SPANGLER